

# The South Danvers Observer

## United in Effort

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### Inside this issue:

**Augusta Fairbanks Daniels, 1844-1908.** 2

**Frances Marguerite Carroll, 1876-1945** 2

**Louise Hudson Teague, 1883-1961** 3

**Dorothy Meacom Cooper, 1895-1978** 3

**Photographic History of the Sutton Room** 4

—No doubt, Eliza Sutton had met George Peabody during his visit to South Danvers in 1856. Not only was Eliza involved in town affairs, but her husband, Eben, had served as a Library Trustee from 1852 to 1856. These were the years when the library grew from merely a dream of its native son George Peabody into the reality of into one of the first free public libraries in Massachusetts.

But when the Sutton's only surviving child, Eben Dale, died in 1862, followed by Eben's death just two years later, Eliza could not let their memories die as well. Whether she considered the prospect of a memorial for her son before hearing of George Peabody's intended return in 1866 is not known. What is known, is that once she offered \$20,000 for the creation of the Eben Dale Sutton Library, she found an avenue in which she could channel her grief.

On this, the 140th anniversary of the opening of the Eben Dale Sutton Library, it is good to look back, not only to remember Eliza Sutton, whose connections to the Library influenced her generosity, but also to recall the six Sutton Reference Librarians, each who had her own connection to the Peabody Institute.



Eliza Dustin Sutton, 1806-1889

## Mary Jaquith Floyd, 1838-1895

—As the first Eben Dale Sutton Reference Librarian, Mary Jaquith Floyd held a unique position. In the end, though, it was one she ultimately decided to give up twelve years later.

The youngest daughter of Isaac and Sophia (Morrill) Floyd, Mary graduated from Peabody High School in 1856. Among her seventeen classmates was Emily Poole, the daughter of the Institute's librarian, Fitch Poole. But that wasn't her only connection to the library. Mary's father, Isaac, owned a bakery on Lowell Street with his brother-in-law, Thomas Stimpson, who served on the Peabody Institute Library and Lyceum Committee from the creation of the library until 1884.

By the time Mary accepted the post in 1869, her parents had died. Of her other five siblings, only two sisters still lived. But her Uncle Thomas Stimpson was alive and must have been proud to have his niece as the first Sutton Librarian.

In those first years, the Sutton

Library was open the same hours as the Peabody Institute, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 2 to 8 p.m.

While Mary must have been thrilled to take on the responsibility for the Library, it doesn't seem she was allowed to write the yearly report for the Trustees as the Institute's Librarian did. Instead, the Sutton Library report was written by the overseeing Committee. Beyond being a strong proponent of the temperance movement, Mary Floyd was also a firm believer that women deserved the right to serve in public affairs.

Perhaps this was the reason for her decision to leave her work as the Sutton Librarian in 1882. As it turned out, her next post gave her more of the freedom she sought. She accepted a position with the South Church as a missionary and assistant to the pastor from 1882 until her death in 1895.

*"You have expressed the happiness you have derived from being able to 'unite your efforts with those of the liberal-minded founder of the Institute & the Trustees for the diffusion of sound learning.' Most assuredly we can conceive of the rewards of a benevolent heart & trust & believe that while your life is spared everything connected with this endowment will tend to increase that happiness. . . ."*

*From George Osborne's Feb. 2, 1867 letter to*

*"As a memorial [to my departed son] I have desired to make to the Institute some offering which should permanently connect his name with this noble public benefaction. . . ."*

*From Eliza Sutton's October 15th, 1866 letter to the Trustees of the Peabody Institute Library*

## Augusta Fairbanks Daniels, 1844-1908

—After Mary Floyd's resignation in March of 1882, the post of Reference Librarian was held until October of that year by Sarah E. Perkins. But when she agreed to marry Thomas Morrill Stimpson, the son of the Library and Lyceum Committee member, she was forced to resign.

The choice of Augusta Daniels as the next Reference Librarian was an easy one. Her connections to the library were as strong as Mary Floyd's had been.

Augusta was born the youngest child of David Daniels and his second wife Eunice Safford. When Augusta was only five years old, her mother died. Not long after, her father married for a third time, Jane Clark Stickney Osborn who cared for Augusta, her three sisters and brother, as well as her half-brother and sisters.

One of Augusta's uncles was Captain Robert Shillaber Daniels, who served as a Library Trustee from 1852 to 1857. Ten years after Captain Daniels' first wife died in 1852, he



Augusta Daniels in 1866

married George Peabody's sister, Judith Dodge Peabody Russell.

Augusta grew up in South Danvers, graduating from the Peabody High School in 1862, the same year Judith Dodge Peabody Russell became her new aunt. The following year, she was hired to

teach the Alphabet School in the Wallis District. Teachers for the Alphabet School instructed the youngest children in their letters and guided them in their first steps toward reading.

Not long after, she moved onto the Primary level and continued at the Wallis School until 1882 when she accepted the post as the Sutton Reference Librarian.

Her early years as the Sutton Librarian are not recorded. Like Mary Floyd before her, Augusta was not allowed to prepare the annual reports for the Trustees. But in 1890, just a few short months after Eliza Sutton's death, we finally hear from Augusta. While the Sutton Committee continued their summary of events, her reports outlined the yearly additions to the collection, as well as recorded all visitors to the Reference Room.

Her yearly reports as the Sutton Reference Librarian continued until her death on January 25th, 1908.

## Frances Marguerite Carroll, 1876-1945

—Frances M. Carroll was elected to the post of Sutton Reference Librarian just a few weeks after the death of Augusta Daniels on Jan. 25th, 1908.

In many ways, her story and that of her parents was the classic American tale. Her parents were born in Ireland and emigrated to Massachusetts during the potato famine. Her father Thomas arrived with his parents, William and Margaret, and his brother William and sister Mary around 1850. Her mother, Mary Ellen Clark, came to this area at about the same time. Frances' grandfather, William, worked as a blacksmith in South Danvers, but he wanted more for his children. And for his children to advance, education was the key.

Thomas took the test to enter the Peabody High School, was admitted in 1852 and graduated in 1855. After high school, he worked in a morocco

factory and advanced quickly. In the mid-1870s, Thomas married Mary Ellen Clark. And by 1880, he had opened his own business on Grove Street. Grateful for the chances he had enjoyed in Peabody, he offered his services to the town.

He was a trustee of the Peabody Institute, served on the Library and Lyceum Committee, oversaw the construction of the new Town Hall, was vice-president of the Peabody Historical and belonged to the Essex Institute. He also served on the School Committee and was a Democratic candidate to the General Court in 1881. His presence in Peabody and his many contributions were the reason the School Committee named the new school being built in 1913 on Northend Street the Thomas Carroll School. He died shortly after it opened.

Thomas and Mary Ellen Carroll's daughter, Frances, was born May 13, 1876. Her name at birth was recorded as Anna Margaret Carroll. When Anna

(Frances) was nine, her mother died. A year later Thomas married Sarah E. Golden.

The progression of Frances' name from Anna to Annie and then Fannie as she was known the Wallis School, which she attended until she was 15, seems to have been a gradual one. By 1900, though, she had made the change of her name from Anna Margaret to Frances Marguerite a permanent one.

While her position as Sutton Librarian came about eight years later because of her father's influence in the town, her work for the next thirty-seven years never failed to be precise. From all reports, she enjoyed assisting researchers. And though she never attended high school or college, Frances became known as an authority on English literature.

Like her father, she was active at St. John's Church and a member of the Peabody Historical Society. She died March 3, 1945.

## Louise Hudson Teague, 1883-1961



John Hudson Teague,  
Louise Teague's grandfather in 1866

—Louise H. Teague was born Lucinda Hudson Teague on September 1, 1883. She was the daughter of Theodore and Louisa Teague and the granddaughter of John Hudson Teague (1815-1880), the first Peabody Institute Library custodian.

Though she didn't officially accept the post as Sutton Reference Librarian until just after Frances Carroll's death in 1945, she had been assisting her and substituting for Carroll for many years before her death.

Though Louise never knew her grandfather, her father, Theodore, must have told her the stories of his work at the Institute.

And so, Louise Teague came into the position already knowledgeable about the Sutton Library's collection and her abilities to serve the public. This she did for thirteen years until her retirement in 1958. She died three years later in 1961.

## Dorothy Meacom Cooper, 1895-1978, the Last Sutton Reference Librarian

—As the last Sutton Reference Librarian, Dorothy Cooper stands apart from her predecessors. She is the only one who had no previous connection to the library before her employment, though her ties to Peabody ran deep.

Dorothy Meacom Cooper was born on Christmas Day in 1895, the only child of Tom and Eliza Meacom Cooper. Her mother, Eliza Danforth Meacom, was born in Peabody, the daughter of George and Maria Meacom, and the great-granddaughter of Dr. Joseph Shed. Dorothy's grandfather, George, inherited his apothecary business from his grandfather and continued the work until his death in 1899.

Dorothy's father, Tom, was born in England and came to the United States shortly before he met her mother Eliza. They married in 1893. Dorothy never knew her father because he died seven months after her birth. She and her mother returned to live with her grandparents on Main Street, where Eliza worked as the treasurer for the G. E. Meacom apothecary company until 1917 when she sold the business to Stanley Gallagher.

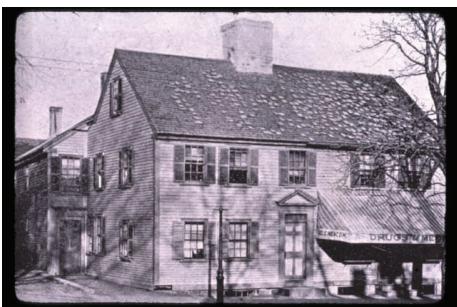
After Dorothy's graduation from

Peabody High School in 1912, she assisted her mother with the new pharmacy, taking on more and more of the work as treasurer. After Eliza died in the late 1930s, the business at Dorothy's home was known until 1944 as the Peabody Pharmacy. After it folded, Dorothy remained in the house, though without a steady income.

In 1958, she accepted the position as Sutton Librarian. Perhaps having a reliable job allowed her to finally have the resources to sell the old house and move to Summer Street. The historic home was renovated but soon after, in 1963, it burned down.

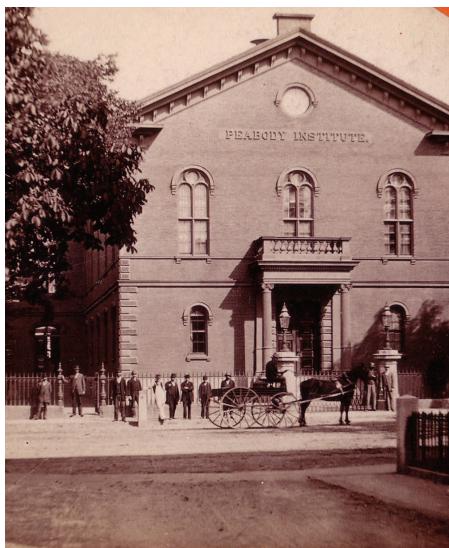
In 1972, a year before Dorothy's retirement, the Library hired a new Reference Librarian. In their preparation to modernize the building and services—and in anticipation of Dorothy's imminent retirement—the trustees voted to eliminate the position of Sutton Librarian.

After Dorothy Cooper's death on April 12, 1978, the Sutton Room's valuable resources were seldom used for the next twenty years. Today the Eben Dale Sutton Room serves as the Library's Archives.

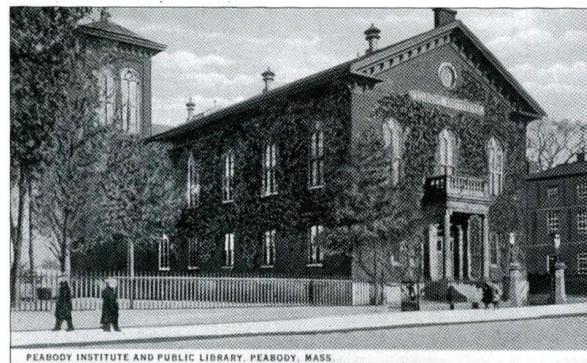


Dorothy Meacom Cooper's home  
on Main Street

# Eben Dale Sutton Library History



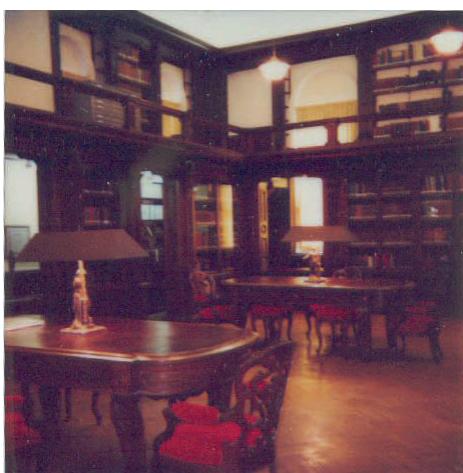
Library in 1870,  
just after Sutton Tower added



Library in 1905



Library in 1954, after third floor of tower removed



Sutton Room in the 1970s



Restored Sutton Room ceiling



Eben Dale Sutton Room today

Works consulted for this newsletter:  
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